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THE DE CLERCK PORTRAITS BY THE MASTER OF  
THE MAGDALEN LEGEND · BY FRANK JEWETT  
MATHER, JR.

FROM a couple of panels in English private possession and others at Copenhagen, Buda, etc., we divine the very distinctive style of a nameless master of the Low Countries. For convenience, since our starting point is stories of Mary Magdalen, we designate this painter as the Master of the Magdalen Legend. Probability points to Malines as his residence; the date of his activity is the first quarter of the sixteenth century. The influences under which he developed are matters chiefly of surmise. He unquestionably knew the work of Van der Goes both in portraiture and in the idyllic vein represented by the copies of the lost David and Abigail. It may be assumed that our nameless master saw the works of Quentin Matsys, but, while adopting certain novelties in composition and lighting of landscape, he remains more archaic than Matsys. He may have been too old and too conservative to follow the ardent innovator of Antwerp.

The chief influence in the two superb altar-wings (Frontispiece) which have recently been added to the collection of Mr. Michael Friedsam is, I think, that of Van der Goes. The stilted but sufficiently effective arrangement recalls that of the donors in the famous Portinari Altarpiece. The general tone is sombre, but the grays of the architecture and the green blues of the landscape are relieved by salmon pinks in the brickwork and by the crimson notes in the gown of the woman at the right and in the robe of St. Philip at the left. The heavy shadowing of columns and tree-trunks and the free touch in the foliage are odd and almost modern features in a design generally severely archaic. But the quality of the picture, while notable enough in a decorative way, depends on the force and severity of the portraiture. Here the Master of the Magdalen

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Legend shows himself the peer of greater men. Despite a rather slow and heavy workmanship, he attains extraordinary character. Nothing could be better in its way than the contrast between the ascetic and the full-blooded types of the old men.

Above each personage is hung his arms. Mr. Van de Put, the learned genealogist and herald, has identified the characters. The bearded man at the right is Sir Charles de Clerck, long in high office and after 1516 treasurer-general of the Netherlands, at Lille, for Charles V. His patron is the Emperor-Saint Charlemagne, with sword and model of the Minster of Aix. De Clerck's wife, Ann Annock, kneels behind him and is clearly identified by the arms which are impaled with her husband's.

The praying pair on the left shutter are her parents, Philip Annock and his wife Marie Collissons. St. Philip the Apostle is the patron saint. The cross fitchée above the prayerful hands of Marie is that which usually served to mark a coffin, and it may well indicate that the portrait is posthumous.

The dignitary, Sir Charles de Clerck, who ordered the picture, lies in the Parish Church of St. John at Malines. A date on the tombstone, 1537, may be that of the wife here represented, since credible authorities give his death as 1523. Ann Annock bore him eleven children, of whom six attained distinction in Church or State. It seems probable that this picture was painted to commemorate the wedding, Sir Charles's third, in which case the date will be not much earlier or later than 1510. What the central panel of which these were the shutters may have been we do not know. It may well enough have been a Nativity or Epiphany, and it is always possible that the shutters may have covered not a painted but a sculptured panel.

The backs of the panels (Fig. 1) are hardly less interesting than the fronts. By what was a novelty at the time, the wings when shut formed one composition representing the Ecce Homo. Everything except the flesh, which is in natural tint, is painted in *grisaille*. The drastic, grotesque type of the soldiers and Jews show the influence of Jerome Bosch, whose leading may also be revealed in the consciously heavy shadows. A strange feature for the time is the prisoner Barabbas peering through the grating of his cell in Rembrandtesque gloom, below the platform on which Christ stands. The scene, with its restricted space and few actors, may echo the arrange-

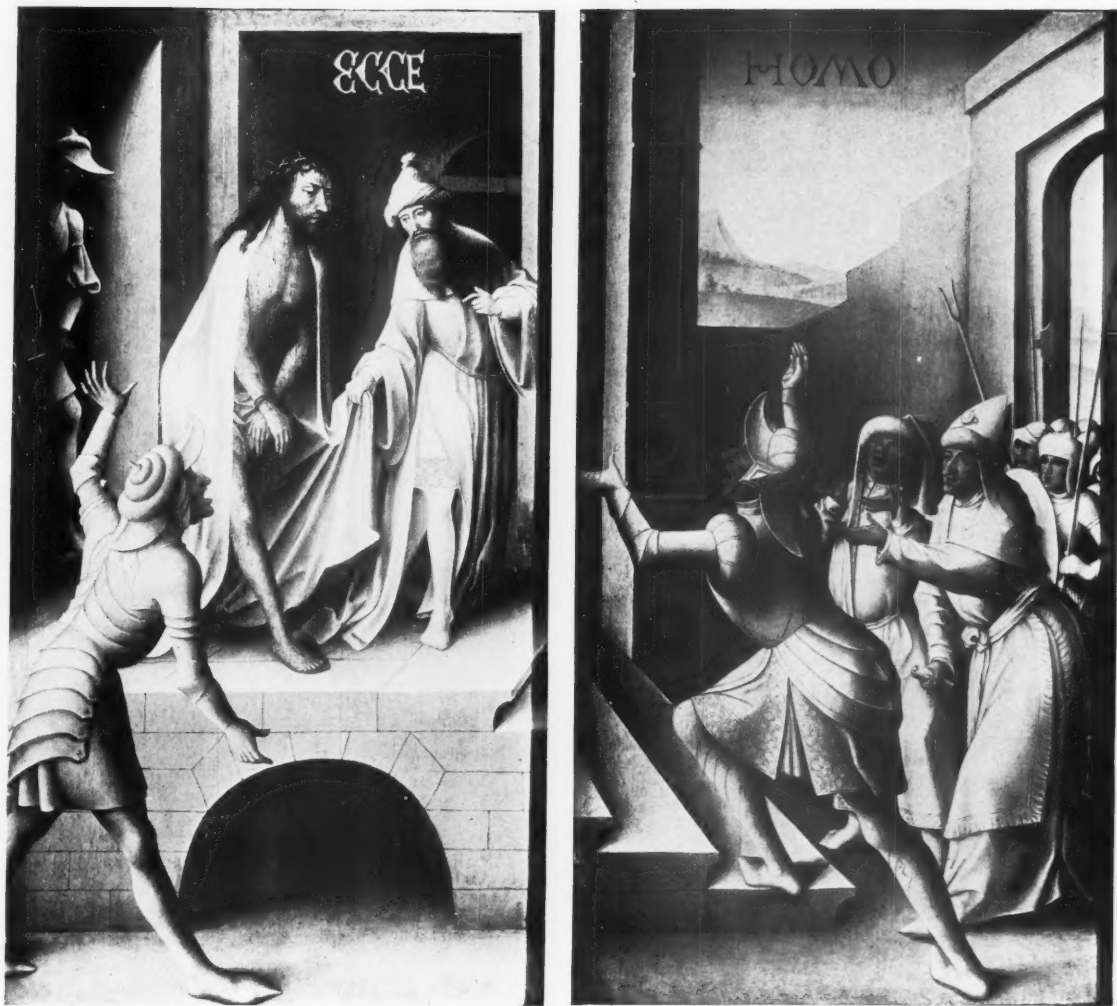
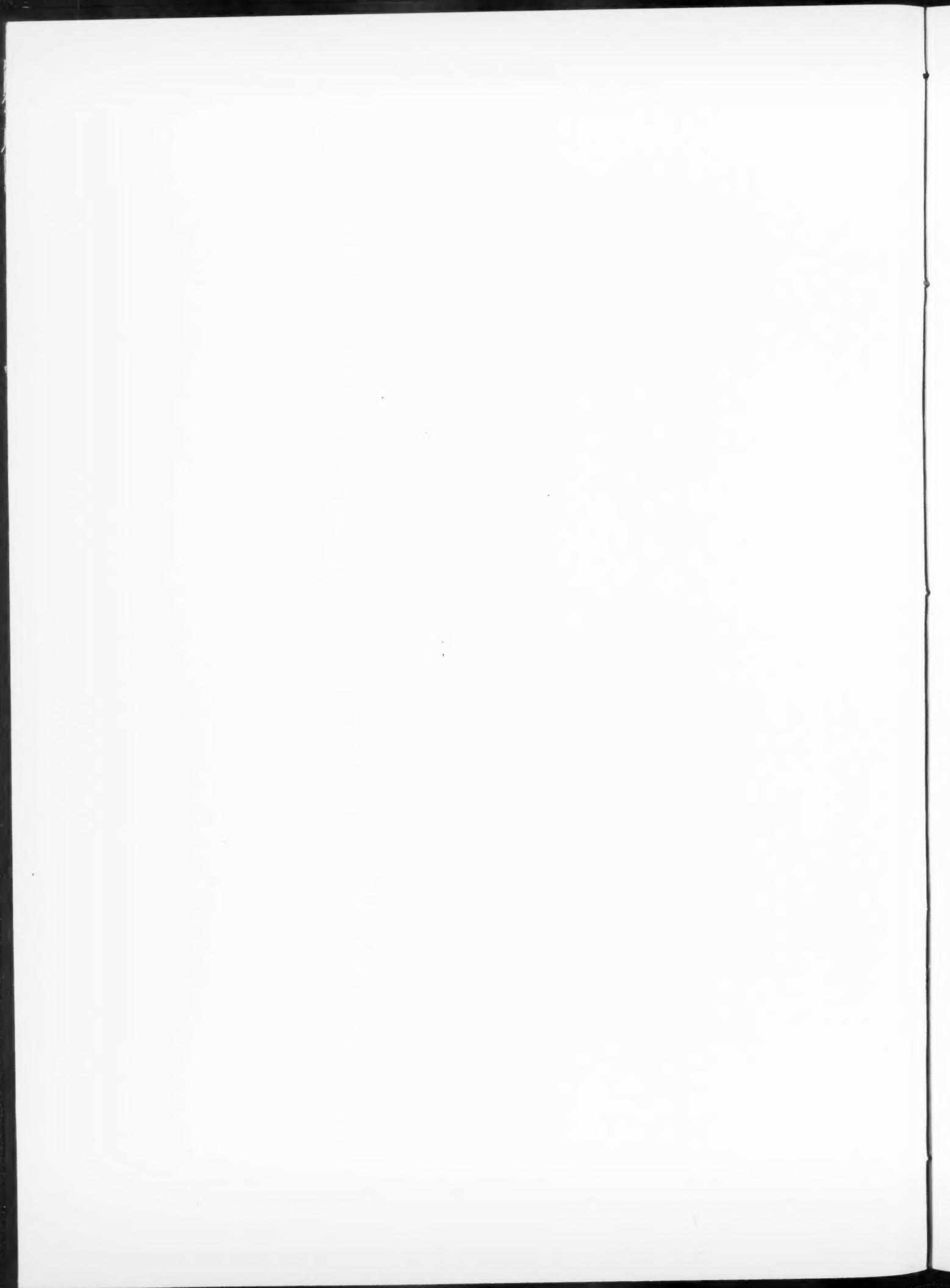


Fig. 1. MASTER OF THE MAGDALEN LEGEND: REVERSE OF THE WINGS OF AN ALTAR PIECE.  
*Collection of Mr. Michael Friedsam, New York.*





ment of a mystery play. The scale of the figures to the architecture is just about what we should expect in the box-like "Habitation" provided for each episode of a dramatic mystery.

On the backs of the shutters the Master of the Magdalen Legend shows himself as an innovator not equal in power to Bosch, but of somewhat similar temper. This phase of his work was not suspected, and its identification should lead to further discoveries. For the fronts of the panels our master sensibly stood by an approved arrangement, only displaying his really considerable technical novelties in the handling of the landscape. If we are right in dating his activity from the early years of the sixteenth century, he must be included among the more notable progressive spirits. He is most impressive, however, simply as a portraitist, and in these likenesses of the De Clercks and Annocks he need not fear the most trying comparisons.

#### EARLY CHINESE PAINTINGS IN THE MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS, BOSTON: PART ONE · BY HAMILTON BELL

NOWHERE in the world, outside of Japan, and not even there with such convenience, under one roof, can the arts of the Far East be studied as they can in the Boston Museum of Fine Arts. The enormous wealth of this collection is hardly appreciated even by serious students of the subject. Merely in number of objects it vastly exceeds any other museum in existence. There are, for instance, over five thousand Chinese and Japanese paintings, many of the very highest quality and more than one unapproached in importance. It is with these alone, and only with those of Chinese origin, that these papers can deal, my purpose being to direct attention to a few of the most important.

The official ascriptions of the various pictures are given here as representing the best available opinion on this nebulous question. The late Okakura Kakuzo, to whom the department of which he was so long head owes an inestimable debt, said wisely that he would be rash indeed who ventured to dogmatize on it. At present it would seem doubtful if enough is known concerning the work of these early men to justify us in asserting the authorship of any one

painting as positively as we can say that the Sistine Chapel was painted by Michel Angelo; in most instances we have hardly advanced to the degree of certainty with which we assume that the Hermes of Olympia is the work of Praxiteles, on the strength of Pausanias' assertion that such a statue by that sculptor had stood, in his day, on the spot where in the nineteenth century this was unearthed.

All that, it would seem, it is safe to do, is to apply our critical judgment to the technical achievement, since fortunately masterwork is unmistakable, whatever the date or nationality of the craftsman; if the work passes this test and is both genuinely ancient and of intrinsic artistic merit, we may, provisionally at least, accept the ascription of the Chinese authority, which we must remember is based on purely literary and traditional evidence. This again is not infrequently construed in entirely different or even opposing senses by the various scholars, even those of Chinese race, who have treated the subject.

How early the art of painting was practised in China is not positively known. Portraits are mentioned in writings as early as 1326 B.C., Confucius (551-479 B.C.) speaks of painting, and we have record of the names of fifteen painters of the Han Dynasty (B.C. 202-221 A.D.). Hsieh Ho (flor. 479-502 A.D.) formulated "The Six Canons" of the art, a fact which would seem to argue a certain amount of general interest in the subject. In any case, the skill shown in the earliest known painting by a Chinese artist, the famous roll, now in the British Museum, ascribed to Ku K'ai-chih, who died about 405 A.D., is such as to predicate a considerable period, antedating its production, during which the art of painting must have been practised in the community which produced it. Another painting, also believed to be by the same artist, has passed to the Freer collection from that of the late Viceroy Tuan Fang. These are, I believe, the only two Eastern paintings of such an early date at present known.

There is no picture of such antiquity in the Boston collection, but of the great T'ang Dynasty (618-906 A.D.) the Museum possesses four, all of fine quality, which fact alone would suffice to give the collection a high rank among those of the world. One of these, the Hokkē mandara (Fig. 1), though only a fragment, is, because of its antiquity and the beauty and skill of its achievement, one of

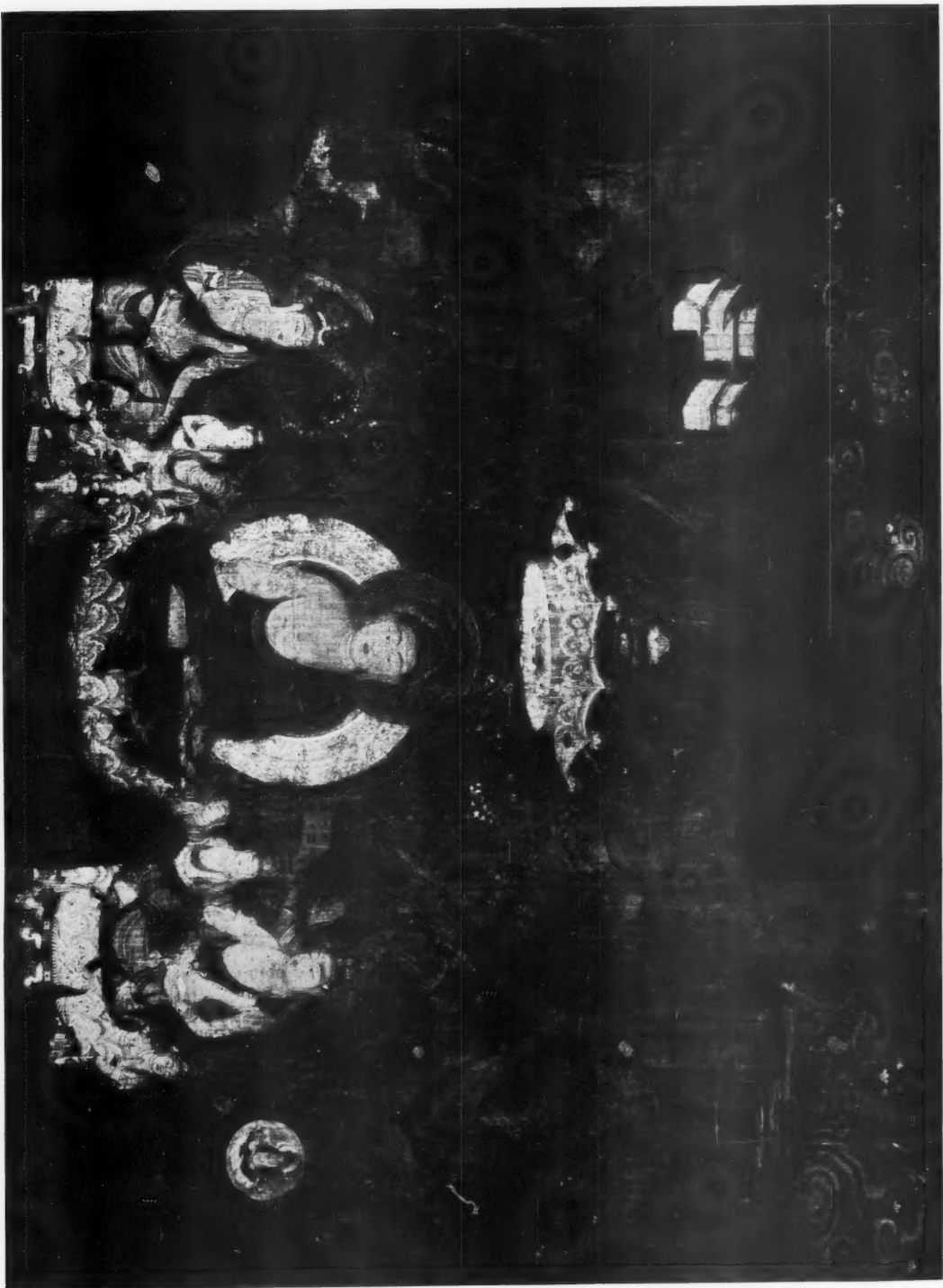
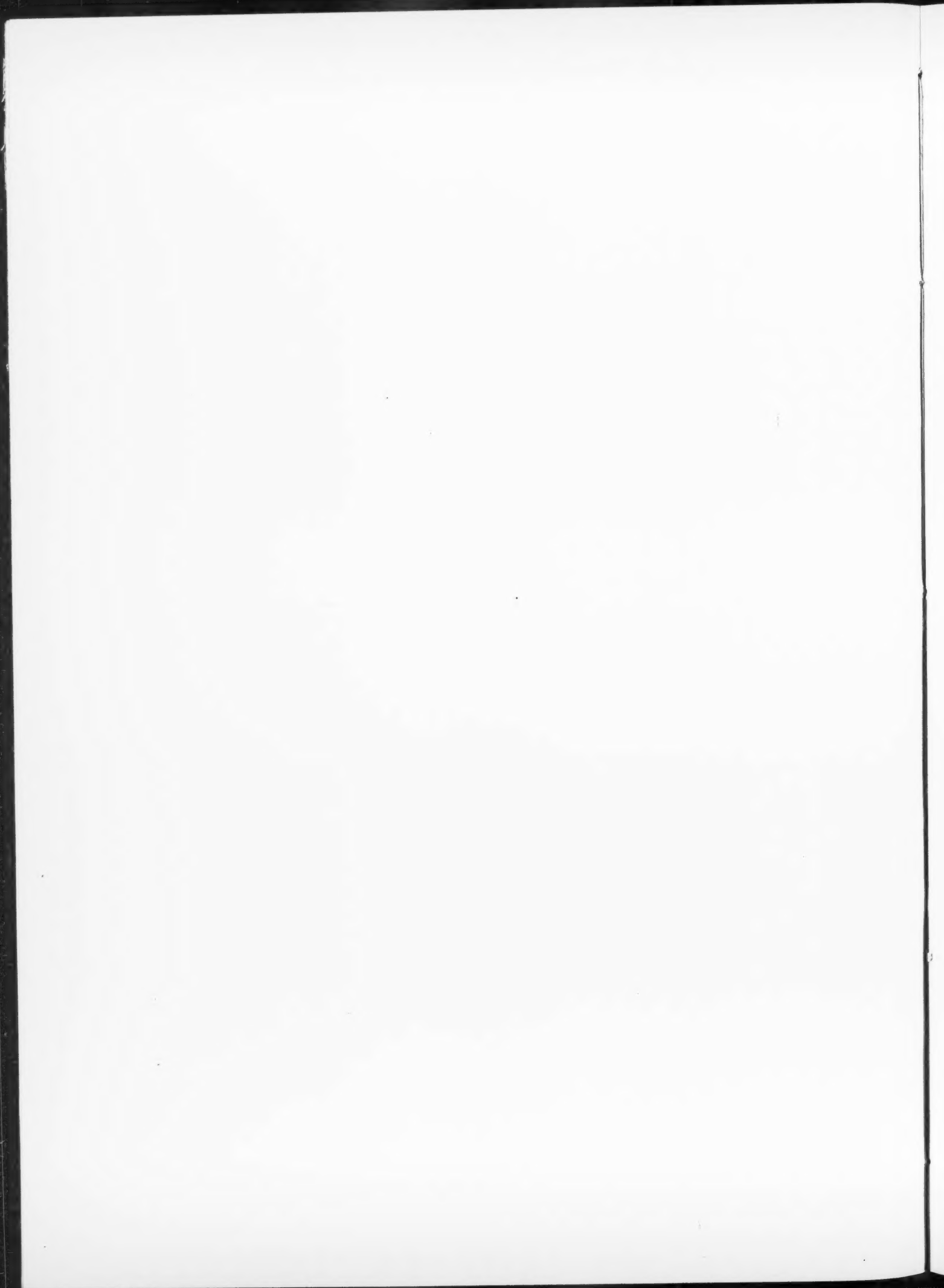


FIG. 1. THE HOKKE MANDARA. T'ANG PERIOD.  
*The Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, Mass.*



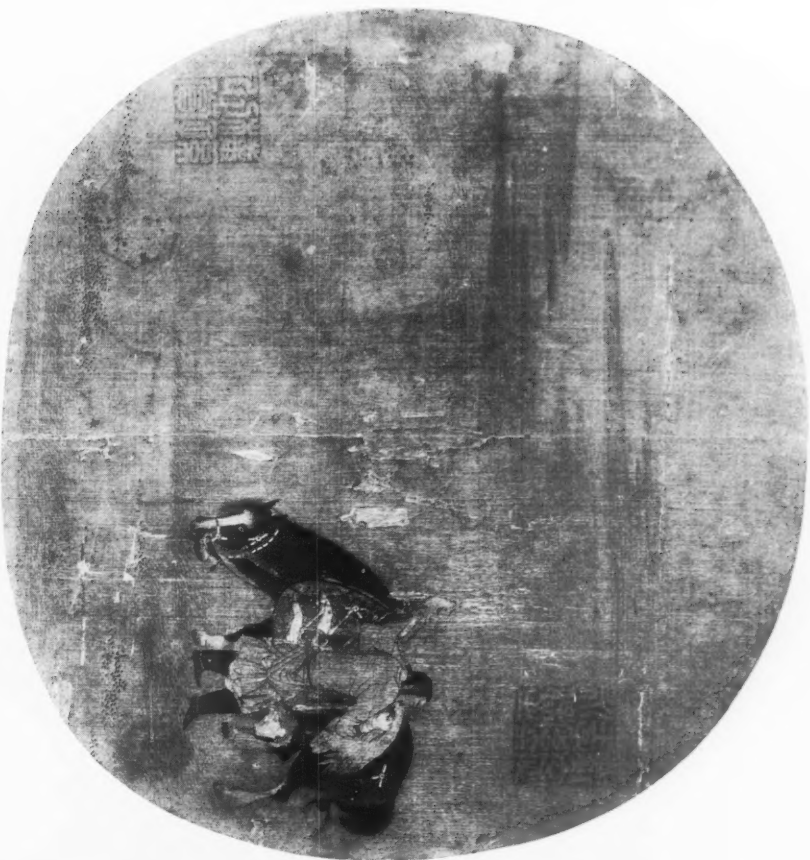


FIG. 2. HU HUI: A MONGOL HORSEMAN.

*The Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, Mass.*



FIG. 3. KU T'CH'EN: PRINCESS WEN FEI AND HER CHILDREN  
RETURNING FROM EXILE.





the most important extant relics of Chinese Buddhist art. It may be said to form a direct connecting link between the arts of India and the noble religious art of Tempyo and Fujiwara of Japan, and of such there are only too few. When first acquired, indeed, it was regarded as a work of the Nara period (*c.* 700-800 A.D.), but prolonged and careful study on the part of the authorities has led to the conclusion that it is Chinese of about the middle of ninth century.

It is, so to speak, "an illustration" of the Hokkē-kyo, a sutra, which, introduced into China in the fifth century, produced a profound revolution in the Buddhism of that country and later of Japan. It narrates that the Buddha, seated in a trance on the Sacred Vulture Peak, surrounded by Bodhisattvas and disciples and attended by heavenly beings, broke silence to announce the latest of his gospels, the crown of his teachings. This was accompanied by a miraculous rain of divine flowers. The scene in which our painter has placed this event is of great beauty, the mountainous landscape being diversified by flowering trees and gushing torrents. The Master is seated on an elaborately decorated lotus throne beneath a canopy, of equal richness, which floats over his head. He is encircled by haloes and, robed in the most fervent vermilion, if vermilion of such age would retain the fire-like intensity of this, he glows like a jewel among the golden browns and greens of the landscape. On his right and left are seated two of the great Bodhisattvas, each also on a lotus throne; as is customary they are crowned and decked with jewels, while the Buddha wears nothing of the sort, but is always garbed with the strictest simplicity. This trinity is attended by several lesser beatitudes, and by a group of holy men who, being still mortal, are undistinguished by haloes and are smaller than the rest. The flesh of all, even of the Buddha, is natural-colored and rosy, not, as is often the case later, golden. The influence of Indian (Gupta) art is very marked, and it is interesting to note that in an inscription on the back which records that the painting was repaired by one Chinkai in March, 1148, it is described as "a real product of India." This of course we know that it is not, but a precious relic of the time when the great Indian religion was spreading far and wide throughout China and the remoter East. As was only natural, the proselyte nations turned to their teachers for guidance in the methods in which the objects of their adoration were to be represented, with the result that they adopted certain of the artistic man-

nerisms of their masters. This is especially the case in the Esoteric sects, in which every attribute and gesture had a mystic importance making its correct representation a matter of vital moment. When we remember the early date of this painting, somewhere about 850 A.D., the high degree of accomplishment it reveals is little less than astonishing; within its limitations, which it must be remembered were self-imposed, it has all the mystery and charm of the Italian masters of the later Quattrocento, together with the sumptuous color of an early Venetian.

Turning now to the secular art of T'ang, we meet with an accomplished and highly sophisticated style of genre painting so complete and masterly that nothing which followed in China surpassed or even equaled it; and, be it noted, it is an art entirely free from the Indian influences we observed in the religious painting.

Fig. 2, by Hu Huai (tenth century A.D.), himself a Kitan of the Tartar race, represents a Mongol huntsman standing by his black, white-pointed steed and tying a dead swan to his saddle, on the peak of which stands the peregrine falcon by whose aid he has secured this noble game. He wears a close black cap and wide-topped boots, and his voluminous buff coat is embroidered, as is his saddle-cloth, with patterns in gold of a miraculous minuteness and delicacy. The whole figure is barely more than two and a half inches high, so that such details as these are necessarily on an infinitesimal scale and the brush work is as fine as any in the very best Persian miniatures. Nevertheless, both he and his horse and even the peregrine and the dead swan are freely and boldly treated with a fine sense of the character of each. It matters nothing whether art such as this be of yesterday or possibly close on to a thousand years old, its greatness overcomes one with admiration.

Fig. 3 is almost modern in its anecdotal presentment of the episode of the Princess Wen fei and her children returning from exile. She and her escort, an armed gentleman, trot steadily along, chatting, he on his roan and she on her gray nag, each carrying a child before them on their saddle-bows. The coloring is sober too, gray blues with touches of red. The artist was Ku Tê-Ch'ien of T'ang.

The fourth painting of this period owned by the Museum of Fine Arts is a delightful domestic idyl by Cho Wen-Chü. On a garden terrace enclosed by a black wooden railing paneled with jade

and embowered in blossoming plants, stretched at full length on a rug, lies a charming little boy in faded vermilion-pink coat and white trousers; about him are his toys and at his feet a white cat; in the foreground, among pots of flowers, sits a tortoise-shell dog. The child looks up from its playthings with a simple natural gesture and the whole has the air of a portrait study from life.

These last three T'ang paintings are, with others of the Sung and Yüan periods, in an album which came from a famous Chinese collection, that of Ching Hsien, and before that had belonged, in the eighteenth century, to a noted connoisseur, Yuen Yuen. The ascriptions of the paintings are therefore regarded as well authenticated and were so accepted, "though not blindly," by the late Okakura Kakuzo. He spoke of these three as dating from the Five Dynasties period, which intervened between T'ang and Sung;<sup>1</sup> but which, lasting only fifty years, is often included with the former, whose style it reflects.

This type of genre subject would seem to have remained as popular under the next Dynasty, the Sung (A.D. 960-1250). One of the finest specimens existing is Fig. 4, *Preparing the New Silk*, by one of the cultivated Emperors of this house, Hui Tsung (A.D. 1082-1135), who not only patronized but himself practised the arts; most delightfully too, if we may judge by this example, which represents a domestic function of certainly annual occurrence. A party of women are engaged in softening the newly woven silk by beating it in a sort of trough, and, at the other end of the picture, stretching and ironing it with a brazier full of hot coals. In the center, one, seated on a mat, is winding silken thread, while a companion by her side is busily sewing. An attendant fans the charcoal for the brazier with a fan on which is painted the most microscopic but lovely landscape. A little girl plays under the stretched silk, treating it as a bridge, while another slightly older demurely holds the edge straight for the ironer. With its dainty, gay coloring, in which madder pinks and purples, and apricot, mingle in chintzlike effects, on white grounds, with sea green and palest blues, nothing could be more enchanting than this vision of domestic life in the Far East of long ago. And again we comment "how modern"; look at the gesture with which the girl shields her face from the glowing charcoal, or the perfectly observed action of the sewing maid, even to

<sup>1</sup> Museum of Fine Arts Bulletin, Vol. X, Dec. 1912, No. 60.

the tightening of her thread with a twitch of the little finger of her needle hand; the merry movement of the little child and the quaint solemnity of her elder who is allowed to help. One imagines that he must have been a sympathetic ruler who could so enter into the simple avocations of his people.

A somewhat different style of genre painting practised by the Sung artists is represented in the Boston Museum by one or two works of men best known as landscape painters. As I propose to devote the next paper to the landscape art of Sung, I shall treat of these genre pictures here.

By Li T'ang, one of the great landscape men, is what would be called nowadays a landscape with figures, though the figures predominate, as does the huntsman in the Hu Huai. A venerable, long-bearded gentleman, no longer in a condition to take care of himself, is being escorted home from a village festival, by his sons or servants, themselves none too sober, who sustain him in an uncertain perch on the back of an ox. The whole episode is treated with a delightful sense of restrained humor.

Another little painting in which the landscape is subordinated to the figure bears the name of Ma Yüan, one of the greatest in the history of Sung landscape painting. A very ghost of a picture, it represents Ling Chao, the Zen philosopher, who was the daughter of a still more famous sage of T'ang times, a melancholy wasted figure standing abstractedly in the snow-drifts, lost in meditation, while the freezing wind creeps on above, the freezing stream below; the merest suggestion of the dark waters between snow-banks and a splintered tree completes this picture of desolation.

The Sung painters carried the art of portrait painting to the highest point which it reached in the Far East; indeed, there exist portraits of this period which remind one forcibly of Dürer or Holbein and of which these masters would have no cause to be ashamed. The really great examples of this branch of painting are rare even in the East, and I know but of two, both in Paris, and only one first rate, outside the Japanese temple and private collections. The Museum possesses none, unfortunately, but some notion of the lifelike presentation of character achieved by the Sung masters may be gathered from such works as the Rakan ascribed to Chou Chichang and Liu-T'ing-Kuei of the twelfth century. They are in full



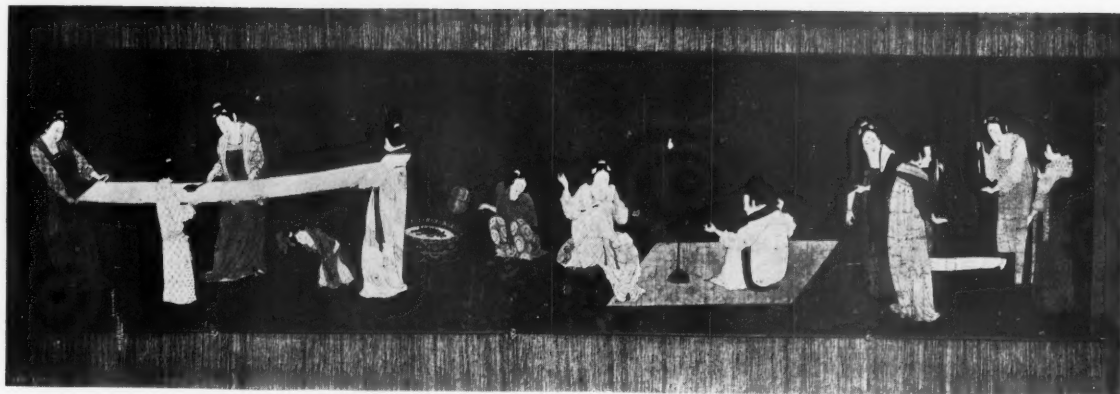
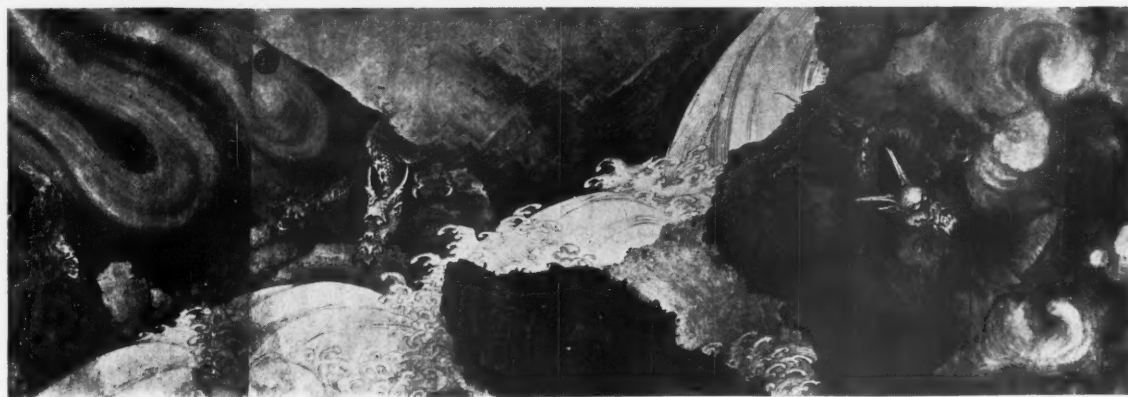


Fig. 4. HUI TSUNG: PREPARING THE NEW SILK.  
The Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, Mass.

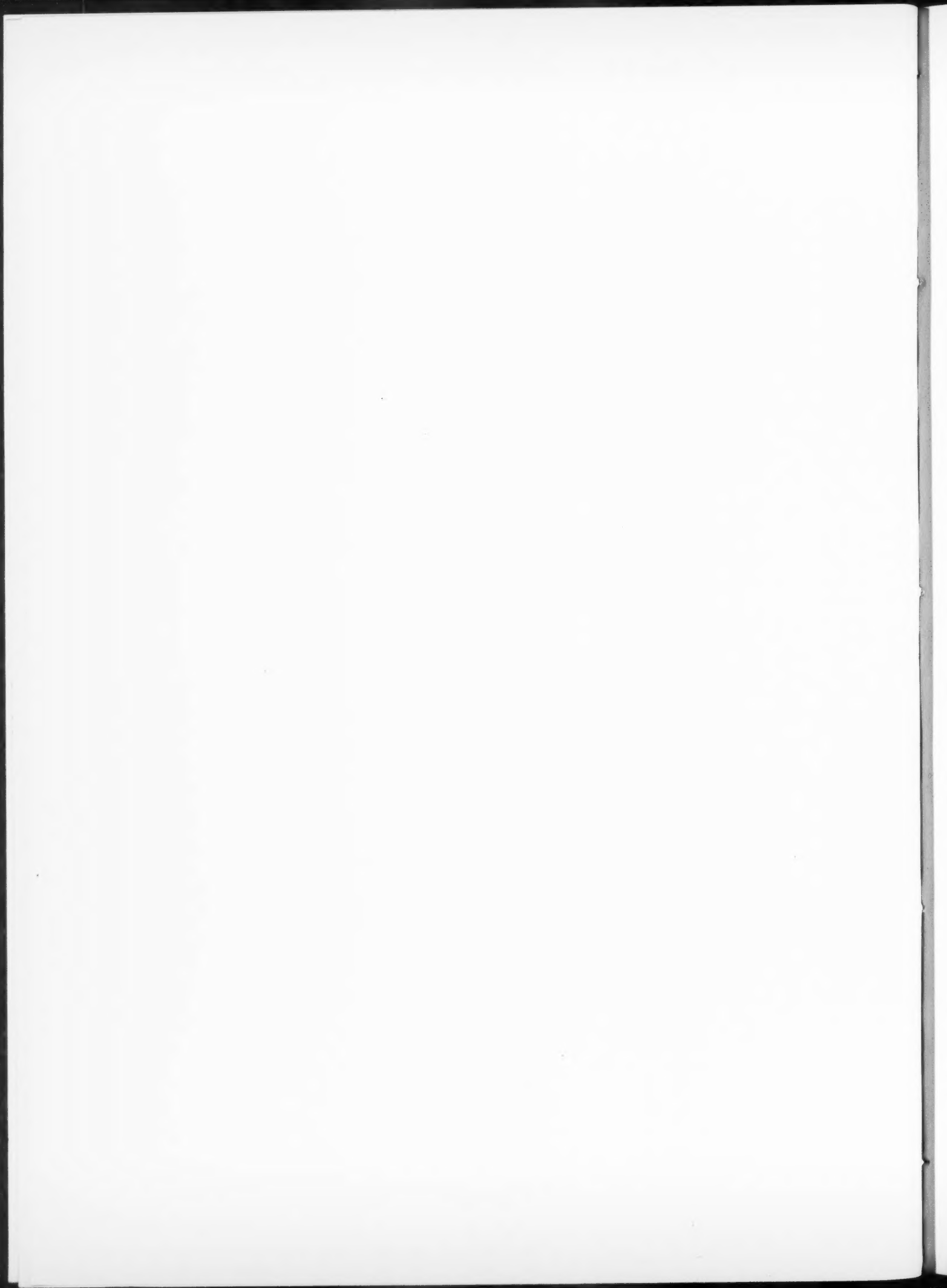


Left half.



Right half.

Fig. 5. CH'EN JUNG: DRAGONS.  
The Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, Mass.



color and display the great variety, daring and subtlety in the use of it which is characteristic of all Chinese art.

There are ten of these paintings, purchased from Daitokuji, a temple in Kyoto, where the remainder of the set of one hundred Kakemono representing the five hundred Rakan are still to be seen. A Rakan (Japanese), or Lohan (Chinese), meaning Enlightened—the Indian name, Arhat, meaning venerable—was a hermit follower of the Buddha, who, by meditation and prayer, had acquired merit to the extent of a supernatural power over matter and so was able to perform miracles. They were possibly adopted into the Buddhist hagiology from Taoism, to the Sennin of which they are akin; but however that may be, the worship, if worship it was, of these venerable personages was very popular in late T'ang and Sung times, and many sets of representations, of the whole five hundred, or the inner circles of eighteen or sixteen, are common from this time on. As often as not they are grotesque, almost to the point of caricature, but sometimes, as in this instance, they have great dignity and an air of reality which suggests that they may be, if not portraits, at least studied from the life.

Another type of quasi-religious picture is "Dragons" by Ch'en Jung (A.D. 1253-59) in china ink (Fig. 5). The Dragon is a Laoist symbol born of the storm and "signifying the supreme sovereignty—the power of change," says Okakura. It may be probably traced in Chinese art before Laotzū's day, but it was invested by his followers with perhaps a higher symbolic value than it had before and was engrafted, with other Laoist emblems, on Buddhism at the introduction of that religion. With the Sung tendency to realism, these stupendous monsters are here treated as if they were real phenomena, disporting themselves with the utmost naturalness, as if at home amid whirlwinds and cataracts. I imagine this to be one of the earliest extant representations of this type of dragon, a type which became current and omnipresent throughout China and Japan. This roll has apparently had some strange adventures, for one half of it was purchased in Paris, the other in New York, at different dates; on being brought together in Boston they proved to be halves of the same painting; when and under what circumstances separated might be a romantic story.

Another symbolic painting is of two enormous carp leaping among breakers, very fine and bold in manner. Three large paint-

ings, in ink and faint color enriched with much delicate gold work, show the Taoist pantheons of Heaven, Earth and the Waters; rare both in subject and treatment, they display workmanship of a very high quality. They came from the Imperial collection.

There are two Buddhist paintings of interest from their association with the style of Chang Su-Kung, a painter of this date, who, strangely enough, is not mentioned in Chinese records, but whose works under his Japanese name of Choshikyo are greatly and justly esteemed in Japan. One, the picture of the Bodhisattva Monju, riding on his lion and bearing a drawn sword in his hand, though much dilapidated and restored, gives the student a good idea of his style, and full deep coloring, enriched with much gold in pattern, as shown in the Japanese examples. The other, a Bodhisattva writing, attended by an ape who holds up his inkstone, has no suggestion of this method and must represent quite another phase of his work. It is rendered in fine bold sweeping lines with very little color and no gilding.

There are a few examples of the flower, bird and insect paintings for which some of the Sung artists were famous, but none of the first quality. The best is a picture of some lotus plants, a favorite subject. It is very faint, having probably been washed, but retains some of its pristine charm.

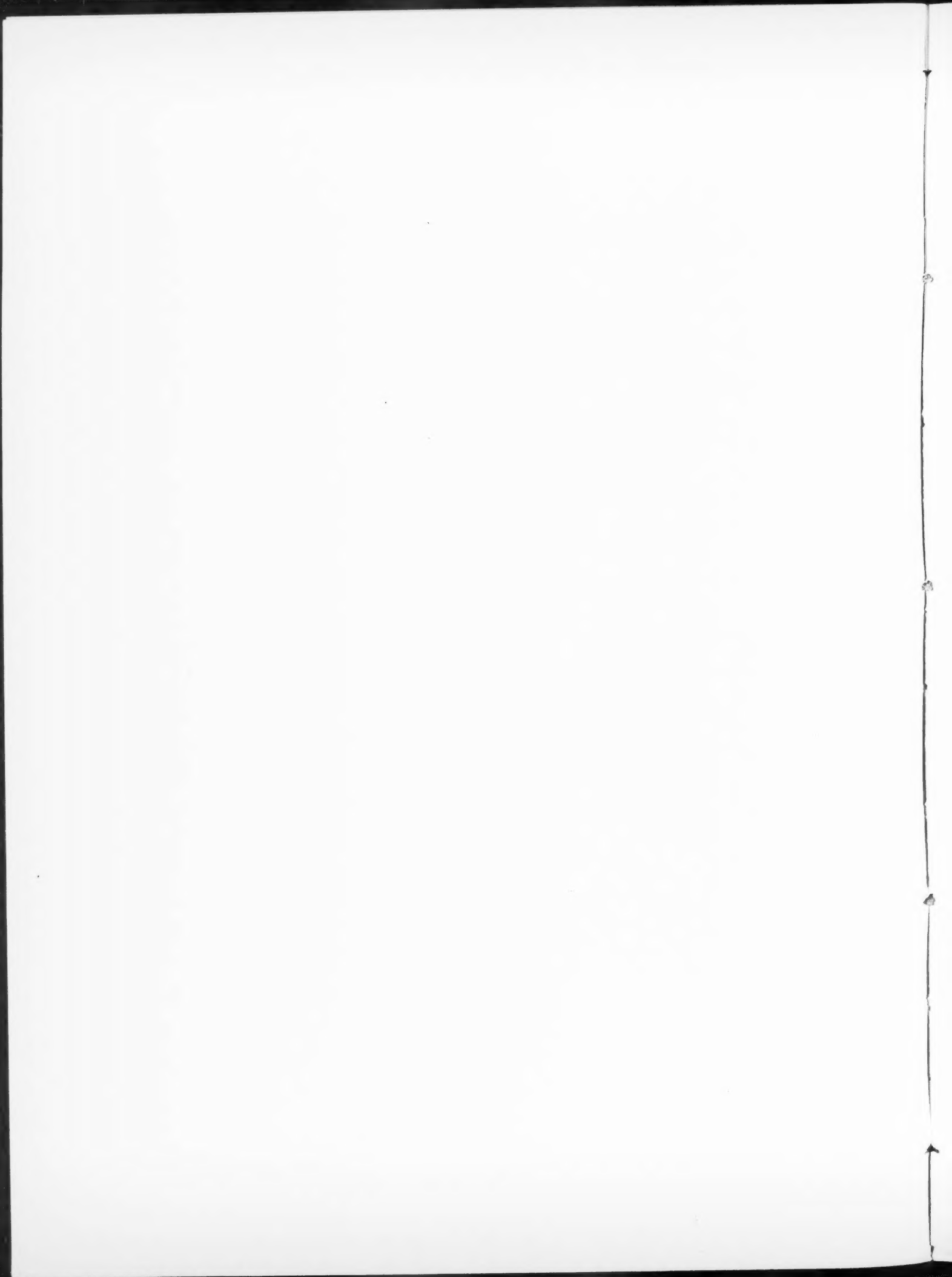
#### A GREEK HEAD IN THE GOLDMAN COLLECTION BY GISELA M. A. RICHTER

THE greatest exponent of the fourth-century spirit in Greek sculpture was undoubtedly Praxiteles. He reflected the individualistic tendencies of his epoch by introducing a new softness and gentleness, which gave his works an almost personal charm in the place of the more idealized and severer beauty of the fifth-century creations. This new conception found its most appropriate expression in his representations of female figures. Unfortunately, no such work certainly by his hand has so far been discovered; but his wide-spread influence on his contemporaries and successors can be seen in many works exhibiting the characteristics associated with his art. Foremost among these are a number of female heads which reflect in varying degrees the art of the master.



MARBLE BUST, GREEK.  
*Collection of Mr. Henry Goldman, New York.*





To these must now be added a beautiful marble head of a girl recently acquired by Mr. Henry Goldman, and at present placed on loan in the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

The head represents a young girl, turned slightly to the left, with her hair bound by a fillet and gathered into a knot at the back. It is about life-size (height of fragment  $13\frac{1}{8}$  inches [33.2 cm.]), and in a good state of preservation, the only serious damage being the loss of the tip of the nose and of a largish fragment from the top of the head. The chisel marks on the left side of the face suggest that it was either left unfinished there, or worked over later. The piece is evidently part of a statue of which the bare left shoulder and a portion of the drapery on the right are preserved. On the under surface is a dowel-hole, which appears to be modern, because if the piece had originally been attached with a dowel in this hole, placed perpendicularly, as it naturally would be, the head would incline back too far. Probably, therefore, the fragment was trimmed to its present shape in recent years.

The type of the head, with its dreamy eyes and sensitive mouth is characteristic of Athenian grace and refinement during the fourth century B.C. Though not of the same careful workmanship, it can be associated with such works as the Chios and the Bartlett heads in Boston, which have been brought into close connection with Praxiteles. It has the same high, triangular forehead, the marked breadth of the nose where it joins the brow, and the same prominence of the central portion of the brow. The treatment of the eyes with their gentle, dreamy expression is also characteristically Praxitelean. This expression was produced by making the opening long and narrow, by inclining the profile of the eyeball considerably downward, and by only slightly marking the lower lid. The rendering of the hair is very different from that in vogue during the fifth century. It is much more sketchy, and consequently more lifelike.

It is interesting in this connection to recall the words of Lucian, the gifted art critic of Roman times, who, in trying to reconstruct a perfect statue, selected what he considered the most beautiful portions of several famous works. In speaking of the head of his imaginary statue, he says:

"Now he (viz.: the sculptor) will allow you to see the growth of the figure as he constructs it piece by piece, taking the head only from the goddess of Knidos. The hair and forehead and the finely-

pencilled eyebrows he will allow her to keep as Praxiteles made them, and in the melting gaze of the eyes with their bright and joyous expression he will also preserve the spirit of Praxiteles." (Εἰκόνας 6.)

It is just these portions of the Greek head we are considering which are the most beautiful; and though the execution be far removed from the perfect finish and consummate treatment of the surface which made the products of Praxiteles so celebrated, we can nevertheless get from it a much better idea of this "spirit of Praxiteles" than from the mechanical Roman copies of the master's most famous statues. How much more do such expressions as a "melting gaze" and a "bright joyous expression" signify when judged by a head such as this, than by the Knidian Aphrodite in the Vatican!

It is not surprising that so original and so consummate an artist as Praxiteles should have had many followers both in his own and in succeeding times; for the soft, evanescent quality he had introduced into his treatment of marble is precisely what would appeal to the spirit of his epoch. We must, however, distinguish two different classes in the "Praxitelean" heads of Greek workmanship which have come down to us—those executed during the fourth century by the pupils and close adherents of Praxiteles, and those made in succeeding generations by various imitators of his style. The first, with all their delicacy and charm, always have a strong, definite form; the treatment of the flesh may be soft, but there is a clearly-defined, bony structure underneath. In the later heads, the artists thought to attain softness by indistinct modelling, and so, though they often succeeded in reproducing a beautiful quality of surface, their works have lost all strength. The Goldman head clearly belongs to the fourth-century groups; for, in spite of its delicacy, it is neither weak nor indefinite. It shows, in fact, what a high standard of beauty and refinement was reached in the fourth century, even by artists who were not in the very first rank.

## A FLORENTINE TAPESTRY · BY JOSEPH BRECK

**A**LTHOUGH Italian artists of the Renaissance exerted a considerable influence at the close of the Gothic period upon tapestry weaving in the Low Countries, the manufacture of tapestries in Italy itself was a comparatively unimportant branch of art. Tapestries were woven in Italy early in the Renaissance period, but by foreign workmen from the north, who set up their more or less ephemeral looms at the caprice of princely patrons. It was not until the XVIth century that the Italian looms could be said to compete at all with the Flemish ateliers. Of the Italian ateliers of the XVth century, the most important was undoubtedly that of Mantua. The celebrated cartoons by Andrea Mantegna, representing the Triumphs of Julius Caesar, were intended for the weavers at the Court of the Gonzaga. Of the looms set up in other Italian cities in the XVth century, we may mention those of Venice, Siena, Rome, Florence, Perugia, Urbino, Bologna, and Milan. Of greater importance were the ateliers of Ferrara.

Tapestry weavers in Italy were not so well organized as their brethren outside of Italy. Furthermore, they did not enjoy the large clientèle and steady business which contributed to the success of the Franco-Flemish looms. This is not surprising, since the mural decoration best suited to Italian climate and architecture is fresco painting rather than tapestry. In the northern countries, on the contrary, fresco decoration was unsuitable because of climatic conditions. A far more logical and practical form of mural decoration was the employment of woven hangings, which would keep out the damp from the stone walls and the drafts from the bitter winds of winter. In the Franco-Flemish ateliers, during the Golden Age of tapestry weaving, there was perfect relationship between the nature of the design and the purpose to which the tapestry was put. Tapestries of this period illustrate the true principle of mural decoration. Designers deliberately avoided realistic imitation of nature, with spatial effects and tricks of illusion; they strove to achieve a decorative flatness of design that should emphasize, rather than destroy, the architectonic quality of the wall the tapestry was to cover. This harmony between design and purpose was never understood in Italy. Italian tapestries, for the most part, are woven pictures, although in the best period there is present a decorative element that saves the

day. Such tapestries may be pictorial in character, but they never descend to the petty, trivial imitation of paintings that has consumed so much ill-spent energy in certain modern ateliers.

To return to Italy, in the XVIth century two manufactories at least achieved considerable distinction in the weaving of tapestries; namely, those of Ferrara and Florence. The ateliers of Ferrara, after a decline at the close of the XVth century, renewed their activity under the patronage of Duke Hercules II (1534-1559). The master-weavers were Nicholas and John Karcher. Among the highly-skilled workmen whom Nicholas Karcher brought from Flanders was John Rost or Rostel.

To rival the tapestry manufactory of Ferrara, Duke Cosimo I of Florence established the Arazzeria-Medici, which was active until the fall of the Medici family in 1737, when the workmen removed from Florence to set up their looms at the court of the Bourbons in Naples. In 1546 Cosimo secured for his new enterprise the two most skilful weavers who had come from the Low Countries, John Rost and Nicholas Karcher. Karcher's work was signed with his initials on the lower border; Rost used a punning device, a roast of meat turning upon a spit. The terms of the contract under which these two weavers were brought to Florence are interesting. Suitable workshops, etc., were to be provided. Karcher and Rost were to receive six hundred gold crowns per year, and were to have the privilege of accepting commissions from clients living elsewhere. The Duke engaged himself to pay for any hangings he might order. On their part, the weavers agreed to set up twenty-four looms, twelve of which were to be in constant employment, and to train apprentices free of charge.

The output of these Florentine workshops was very large. The hangings from the workshops of Karcher and Rost are of fine quality. Toward the close of the XVIth century, however, there was a marked decline both in workmanship and design. In the best period, cartoons were furnished by many distinguished Florentine artists. We may note the names of Bronzino, Alessandro Allori, Il Bachiacca and Francesco Salviati. During the last third of the century, many tapestries were woven from the designs of Stradano, or John Van der Straaten, a Flemish designer who held the official post of designer to the manufactory.

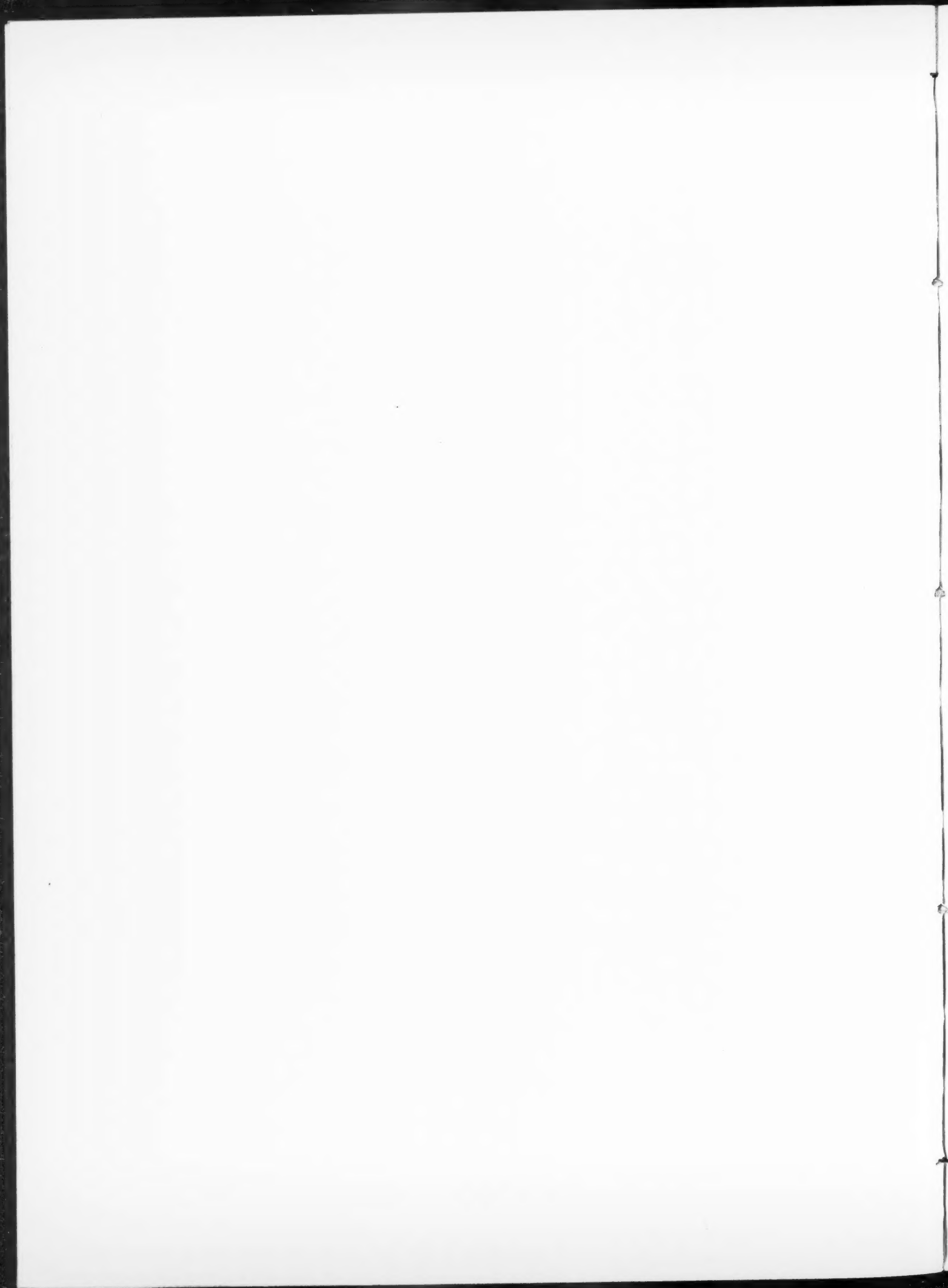




MEETING OF DANTE AND VIRGIL.

SIXTEENTH CENTURY ITALIAN TAPESTRY. WOVEN BY JOHN ROST AFTER A CARTOON BY  
FRANCESCO SALVIATI.

*Charles Jarius Martin Collection, Minneapolis Institute of Arts.*



A remarkable example of the finest type of tapestry weaving from the Florentine looms is in the permanent collection of the Minneapolis Institute of Arts. This large tapestry, measuring 16 ft. 7 in. in height by 15 ft. 4 in. in width, forms part of the Charles Jairus Martin Memorial Collection of Tapestries, the gift of Mrs. Charles J. Martin. The tapestry was formerly in the collections of The Duchess of Zagarolo (1824) and of Mr. J. Pierpont Morgan. It was woven by John Rost, whose device may be seen in the lower left hand corner of the selvage. Corresponding to this on the right is the mark of the manufactory, a fleur-de-lis between two capital letters F. In date the tapestry may be assigned to about the middle of the XVIth century. It was evidently woven for some member of the Salviati family, whose arms appear in the upper border.

The subject of the tapestry is taken from the opening canto of Dante's *Divine Comedy*. The scene represented is the appearance of Virgil to Dante. In the foreground are the three symbolical animals; the panther, the lion, and the she-wolf, who brought fear to the heart of the poet lost in the forest. Particularly beautiful is the drawing of the foliage. The border is an unusually fine example of the grotesque style of decoration. In regard to color, the fanciful motives of the border are developed in various colors on a ground of golden yellow. This color also appears in combination with shades of green and brown in the foliage. Dante's mantle is a rose color; Virgil's costume, violet and pale blue; the sky and distance, delicate shades of blue and green. Technically the weaving is of a very high order of workmanship. Considered from every standpoint, it may be said with certainty that there is no finer example in any American collection of the XVIth century Italian tapestries.

It is often difficult, if not impossible, to determine the artist from whose cartoons a tapestry may have been woven. It is clear, however, that in the present case an artist of marked ability has supplied the cartoon. On evidence of style, we may assume that this artist was Francesco Rossi de' Salviati, who, as we have previously stated, provided many cartoons for the Arazzeria-Medici. Salviati was born in Florence in 1510 and died in Rome, November 11, 1563. He was the pupil of Bugiardini, Bandinelli, Brescianino, and, about 1529, of Andrea del Sarto. He worked in Florence, Rome, Venice,

and, for a short time, in Paris. He was called Salviati because of the patronage which he received from this celebrated Florentine family. The fact that the tapestry was woven for a member of this family further strengthens the belief that the cartoon was probably by Francesco Rossi.

PORTRAIT OF MRS. RICHARD ASHHURST PAINTED  
BY THOMAS SULLY · BY CHARLES HENRY HART

**I**N the October number was presented one of Sully's most characteristic portraits of a robust, virile man and this painter's dainty, delicate delineations of pretty women are so favorably known that to many his skill as a painter is measured alone by his accomplishment in this field. But we have the much appreciated privilege of presenting at this time, through the courtesy of the subject's great-grandson, Mr. R. H. Bayard Bowie, of Philadelphia, a portrait of a woman in advanced middle life, Mrs. Richard Ashhurst, so serious and so distinguished as to make one regret that Sully should have frittered away so much time in the painting of mere evanescent prettiness, when he had the ability to paint a portrait of the superlative sterling quality of this one. Its significance in a survey of American art is notable. Indeed, it is hard to quite believe that it was painted by Thomas Sully, a decade more than three-quarters of a century ago, when it cannot fail to bring to mind some of John Sargent's most admired work, handled in a like manner and painted with as limited a palette. It is almost monochrome, excepting in the flesh, painted in gradations of black and blue pigments, skilfully managed and executed with great brilliancy. The relief pictorially needed is afforded by the vase of flowers and the corner of the white table cloth. This scheme of color, an artist's delight, does not dominate in the reproduction which, while a most attractive picture, fails to convey a correct impression of the painting by preserving the values accurately, for the simple reason that the camera gives the blue shadows of the lace cap and bertha as white, thus changing the effect and character of the work. This solidly, well modelled portrait with its charm of face and expression, was painted in the artist's fiftieth year, 1832, on a kit-kat canvas and it is needless



THOMAS SULLY: ELIZABETH, WIFE OF RICHARD ASHHURST.  
*Property of Mr. R. H. Bayard Bowie, Philadelphia.*





to say that in this refined and elegant English woman any painter would have had a subject to put him to his mettle and Sully certainly rose to the occasion and produced a work of art that lifts him away above his common perfunctory portraits. Another stimulus to high achievement may have been that Sully had painted already a portrait of Mr. Ashhurst, an old-time Philadelphian, as also a large group of their three grown daughters, which is an extremely well composed and well executed picture. Sully's brush having been chiefly employed on private commissions, it is rare to find in galleries good examples of his work, so that the public are unable to see for themselves how skilful a painter he was but must depend upon reproductions and the views of those who have been more fortunate.

CHRIST APPEARING TO HIS MOTHER BY ROGIER  
DE LA PASTURE · BY FRANK JEWETT MATHER, JR.

**M**R. MICHAEL DREICER has recently bought an early work of finest quality, by Rogier de la Pasture, Christ appearing to His Mother after the Resurrection (Plate). It is a masterpiece alike of tense workmanship and of deep religious feeling. The general pallor of the color gives a sense of silvery dawn pervading the meadows and the Gothic oratory where the scene takes place. Amid the sober modulations of gray, the rich crimson of Christ's mantle and darkened blue of Mary's robe are effective contrasts. Through the doorway in the middle distance Christ is seen moving away from an empty tomb about which three soldiers sleep. An Angel witnessing the miracle stands ready to tell the Three Maries who approach from afar. Beyond the meadows are the roofs and spires of a walled Gothic town, from which the foothills recede to a distant mountain skyline. The whole composition is set in a painted frame, being the portal of the oratory. The doorway is rimmed with finely drawn sculptures. St. Paul is at the spectator's right, St. Mark at the left. Both stand on columnar pedestals under elaborate canopies. On either side of the curve of the arch are three groups, the stories reading from the left to the right of the apex. These are in order the Three Maries telling the Blessed Virgin of the Resurrection, the Ascension, Pentecost, Gabriel Announcing the Death of Mary, the Apostles Taking Leave of Mary

(Mary exceptionally is shown sitting up owing to requirements of space), and the Coronation of Mary by the Trinity. Two of the capitals supporting the vault are decorated with episodes from the story of Samson. These little groups are firmly and delicately drawn in the happiest simulation of Burgundian sculpture. Under the point of the arch hovers in air a seraph carrying a great crown from which dangles a scroll with the Latin inscription: *Mulier hic perseveravit . . . ideo data est ei corona* cf *Apoc vi<sup>o</sup> c<sup>o</sup>*. On the border of the Virgin's mantle are embroidered the words of the *Magnificat*. This feature is lacking in the Berlin version.

The main subject is of course not biblical but derived from that popular book of devotion, "Meditations on the Life of Christ." This eloquent and highly sentimentalized treatise grows out of the Franciscan revival of the thirteenth century, and was generally ascribed to St. Bonaventura. It was from the first a strong influence on the mediæval painters, but the more fanciful scenes made their way slowly. I do not know of any early Italian picture on this subject, nor have I been able to find it in Northern miniatures of early period.<sup>1</sup> By the fifteenth century, as Emile Mâle has shown, the "Meditations" dominated the art of Northern Europe. We read in the eighty-seventh chapter that Jesus after liberating the patriarchs from Hell returned to the tomb, reassumed his body and rose at the dawn of Sunday, the third day. The Three Maries were already approaching, but Christ repaired immediately to the home of His Mother, where in constant prayer she was considering his prophecy that on the third day he should rise. Therefore she prayed:

"Return my beloved, come Lord Jesus, come my only hope, come to me my son"! As she was thus praying and weeping gently, behold suddenly the Lord Jesus came in whitest raiment, with serene



<sup>1</sup> In that remarkable compendium "La Bible Moralisée," published by Count A. de Laborde for the Société pour la reproduction des Mss. à Peintures, I find a subject which has possible relations to ours. It is on fol. 178 of the Bodleian fragment and represents the Synagogue pleading with Christ to release the Souls of the Patriarchs from Hell. The two figures are set under arches and Christ shows His wounded hands. The scene follows the entombment. A careless observer of this unusual composition, not noting the absence of a nimbus from the head of the Synagogue, might easily mistake it for an appearance of Christ to His Mother. Indeed, the passage in the "Meditations" might rest upon so pious and romantic a misinterpretation of a similar picture.

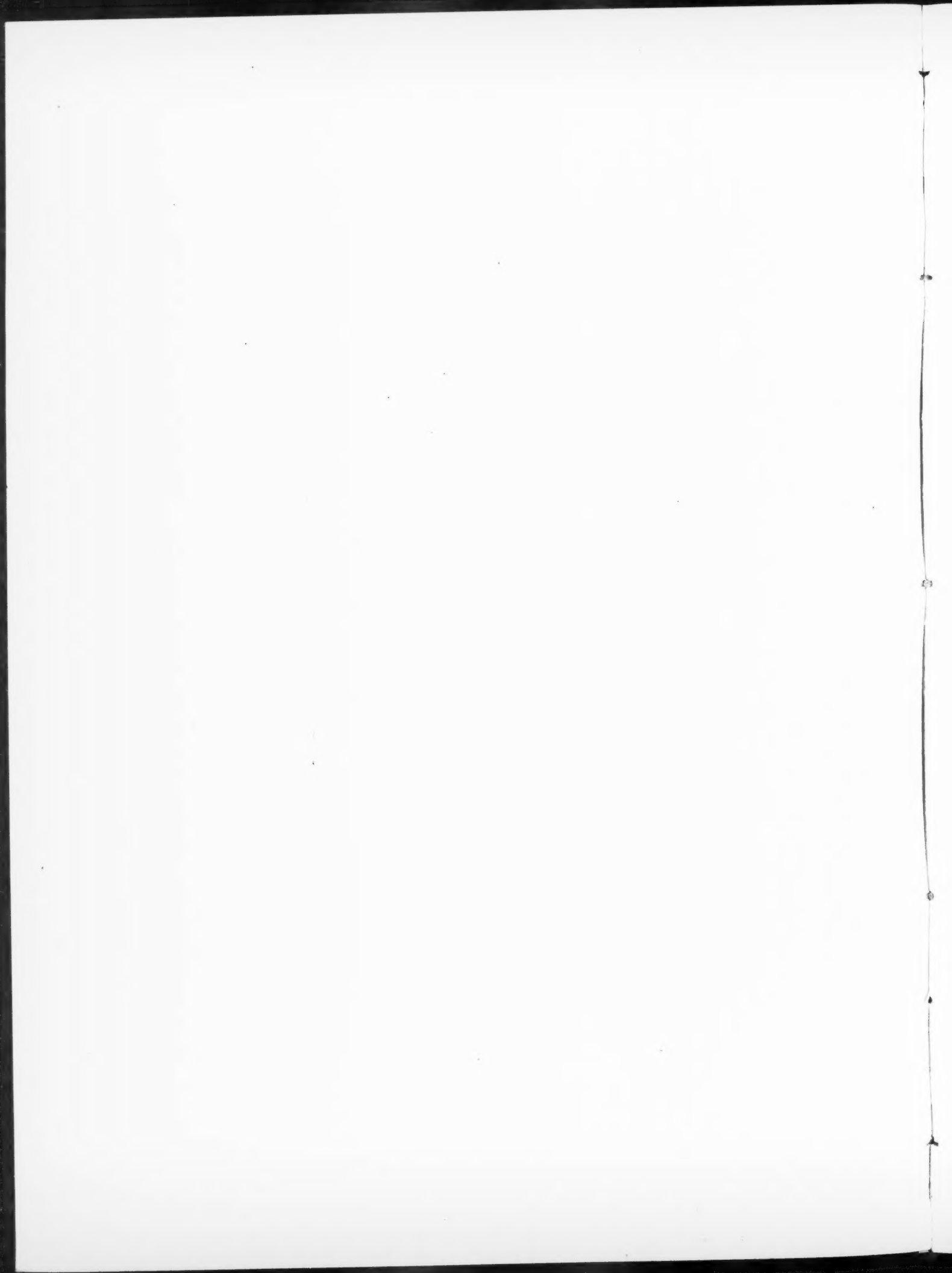








ROGIER DE LA PASTURE : CHRIST APPEARING TO MARY  
COLLECTION OF MR. MICHAEL DREICHER, NEW YORK



countenance, splendid, glorious and rejoicing, and said to her, from one side; 'Hail, sacred Mother.' And she turning quickly said 'Is it thou my son Jesus?' And she knelt adoring. And her son said to her; 'Sweetest mother it is I, I have risen and come to thee.' "

Such is the text that Rogier de la Pasture had before him, and it has supplied all the main pictorial themes. Embellishments of his own are the crimson robe of the Christ and the substitution of a rich oratory for a humble dwelling. The splendor of Christ's aspect, as described by the author of the "Meditations," Rogier has probably not tried to represent. He has preferred instead the idyllic and pathetic features of the narrative. His author furnished the motive, Christ showing His wounds. The "Legenda Aurea," Cap. LIV *De Resurrectione*, also countenances this appearance of Christ to His Mother, quoting authors as early as Ambrosius and Sedulius in corroboration. The author of the "Legenda" (Ed. Graesse, p. 241) admits the silence of the Scriptures and establishes his case on general probability. "Sed absit, ut talem matrem talis filius tali negligentia dehonorerit." The Evangelists are silent, he adds, because it is not meet a mother should bear witness for a son. He continues, "Debut enim matrem prius laetificare de resurrectione, quia amplius caeteris constat doluisse de morte, ne matrem praetereat, qui sic alias consolari festinat." The scene, Christ appearing to His Mother after the Resurrection, occurs in "Le Mystère de la Passion," by Arnoul Greban (see Ed. of Gaston Paris and Gaston Raynaud, v. 29, 122 ff). But the date of Greban's Mystery is about 1450, and it may have been influenced by pictorial representations. It is not safe to accept Mâle's theory that the plays generally antecede and influence the work of sculptor and painter. The reverse is frequently the case. To return to Rogier's fine design, it very well illustrates that mixture of reverence and independence with which the early Flemish masters transmuted literary descriptions into pictures.

This picture is a slightly smaller duplicate of the right panel of the famous Miraflores triptych which since 1850 has been in the Berlin Museum. Under these conditions, the panel hung undesired in our market for a couple of years or more, and its present owner showed a certain courage in buying it despite the prestige of the Berlin version.

No early Flemish picture is so deeply invested with the glamor

of tradition as this triptych of the Virgin which for centuries stood in the Carthusian Monastery of Miraflores near Burgos. All that we really know about it is told by A. Ponz in his "Viaje de España," 1793. He describes the triptych as he saw it in the *Cartuxa* of Miraflores, and he copies from the record book of the Convent the information that it was given in 1445 by King Juan who had it from Pope Martin V, and that it was by a famous Flemish master named Rogel. To complicate matters, duplicates of the central panel, the Deposition, and of the left-hand panel, the Holy Family, have been discovered in the Cathedral of Granada. These fragments are found among a collection that certainly came from Queen Isabella the Catholic. They are mutilated at the top, being rectangled in order to fit into an ensemble that was made in 1632 by the architect Alfonso de Mena. Since then they have not been changed. As Mr. Dreicer's panel, which was recently in the Osuna collection, has not been cropped at the top, it seems probable that it was no longer in possession of the Cathedral when the assemblage of old pictures was made by De Mena. It, however, belonged originally with the two still at Granada, as the dimensions, about an inch and a half smaller in every way than the Berlin panels, attest.

It seems certain that the Berlin triptych is the one seen and described by Ponz at Miraflores. Credible tradition has it that it was taken as booty by General Armagnac who overran Old Castile in 1813. Despite its excellent provenience, the critics, notably Förster and Waagen, have regarded it with a stepmotherly eye, setting it down as a copy. Dr. Bode in *Aemtlliche Berichte* for Nov., 1908, gallantly tries to save the situation by vindicating the copy as contemporary and from Rogier's studio. He admits, under proper reserves, that the Granada panels and what is now Mr. Dreicer's are originals. Valerian von Loga in the Prussian *Jahrbuch* for 1910 believes the smaller triptych to be original, and suggests that the Berlin copy may have been made by that Juan Flamenco who is known to have been working at Miraflores in the last years of the fifteenth century. Von Loga shows that Queen Isabella held court at Burgos near Miraflores from 1496, and in the sadness following the death of the crown prince Miguel in 1498 is likely to have made the gift of a splendid copy of the altarpiece which her husband had from Pope Martin V.

As to the early history of the composition, A. J. Wauters, in the *Burlington Magazine*, XXII, makes the interesting suggestion that the triptych is likely to have reached Martin V through the hands of the legation that visited him in 1425 to obtain a charter for the University of Louvain. This can neither be proved nor disproved. It is more likely than the tradition that the Miraflores triptych was used as a traveling altarpiece by Charles V. Such a legend has attached itself to several pictures. The Miraflores triptych is a bulky traveling companion even for a very great monarch, and it is improbable that the friend and patron of Titian would have found Rogier de la Pasture, whether in copy or original, anything but repellent. If we were pursuing the primrose path of legend, it would be necessary to evoke the wraiths of the two Rogiers created by recent fantastic criticism. Our Rogier, according to the warlocks, would be a certain Rogier of Bruges and not him of the pasture.

Without stirring this particular hornets' nest, the matter may be briefly summed up as follows. We should no longer use interchangeably the terms Miraflores Altarpiece and Triptych of Pope Martin V. The Miraflores Altarpiece, now at Berlin, is a good old copy, of the Triptych of Pope Martin V, two parts of which have passed in orderly succession from the Catholic Kings to the Cathedral of Granada, from which a third has strayed by ways which one may only imagine into the hands of Mr. Dreicer. No one who has studied his panel has doubted either its authenticity or its quality. No early Flemish pictures in America except Mr. Johnson's St. Francis by Jan van Eyck, and Crucifixion by Rogier, and the portrait of Leonello d'Este by Rogier, which the war has brought into our art market, seem to me at all in the same class. I may note that Rogier repeated the subject Christ Appearing to His Mother in a larger, later, and less attractive version which is now in the American art market. It has been published in the *Burlington Magazine*, Volume XVI, by W. H. J. Weale. Without his high authority for attribution and period, I should have supposed it by some faithful disciple working on the basis of the earlier design some years after the master's death. Memling also uses the subject in *The Life of Mary*, at Munich, setting each figure in an archway, quite after the tradition of the Saviour and the Synagogue in the miniatures. Our subject well corresponds to that access of sensibility which marked the last febrile glories of Gothic art.



### THREE FRAGMENTS OF THE EARLIEST FRENCH TAPESTRY : BY R. A. MEYER-RIEFSTAHL

**A**MONG the most important pieces recently acquired by the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York is an early Gothic tapestry representing the Christ on the Cross, surrounded by Saints, which belonged formerly to the Morgan and Hoentschel collections. This piece is very famous as well for its beauty as for its historical importance, for it is generally considered to be the oldest French tapestry in existence. Paul Vitry calls it more archaic than the famous Escosura tapestry of the Presentation in the Temple now in the Musée du Cinquantenaire in Brussels, and ascribes it to a Parisian workshop. Jules Guiffrey, Robert T. Nichol and W. M. Milliken take the same standpoint.<sup>1</sup> Its date is unanimously assigned to about the year 1300 A.D. It has been considered to have been an antependium. The Escosura tapestry in Brussels of the early XIVth century and the famous Apocalypse in the Cathedral at Angers, dating from 1376, are the only other early French tapestries of the XIVth century.

We are fortunate enough to increase this series by one important piece. It is preserved in the Germanic Museum in Nuremberg—we feel able to prove that the Nuremberg tapestry comes certainly from the same workshop as the Metropolitan tapestry and is even a fragment of the same piece.

The Nuremberg tapestry is described in the catalogues of the Museum as follows:<sup>2</sup> "No. 101 (670 in Hampe's Catalogue) Dorselet, for choir stalls or antependium of an altar, woolen tapestry, six saints: St. Clara, St. John Baptist, St. Agnes, St. Elizabeth (St. Dorothea in Hampe's Catalogue), St. Peter, St. Paul. On blue ground covered with yellow stars, 168 cm. ( $66\frac{1}{4}$  inches) long, 76 cm. (=30 inches) high, XIVth Century (about 1400 in Hampe's Catalogue)." This same tapestry is mentioned by Müntz as a German tapestry of the XIVth Century, but he seems not to have

<sup>1</sup> Paul Vitry, *Les collections Pierpont Morgan*, *Gazette des Beaux Arts*, Vol. IV-XI, 1914, p. 434. Jules Guiffrey, *Les tapisseries du 12e à la fin du 16e siècle*, p. 8.—Robert T. Nichol in *Guide to the Loan Exhibition of the J. Pierpont Morgan Collection at the Metropolitan Museum of Art*, New York, 1914, page 27.—W. M. M. in *Bulletin of the Metropolitan Museum of Art*, July, 1916.

<sup>2</sup> *Katalog der im Germanischen Museum befindlichen Gewebe und Stickereien* (by Essenwein) Nuernberg, 1869, No. 101, with lithographic reproduction; and Theodor Hampe, *Katalog der Gewebesammlung des Germanischen Nationalmuseums*, Nuernberg, 1896, No. 670 (with photographic reproduction). The tapestry has the inventory number of the Museum G. 101.



XIVTH CENTURY FRENCH TAPESTRY.  
*Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.*



XIVTH CENTURY FRENCH TAPESTRY.  
*The Germanic Museum, Nuremberg.*



known the piece itself, as he simply copies the notice in Essenwein's Catalogue.<sup>1</sup> Circumstances have not permitted an examination of the tapestry itself, but even the photographic reproduction shows that it has been sewed together and consists of two fragments, each with a representation of three saints. Both groups of three figures seem to be facing towards a centre piece which is not there, and this centre piece is without doubt the tapestry at the Metropolitan Museum. To establish this identity we must first study the measurements of both pieces. An absolute equality in the height of both tapestries cannot be expected, as neither is intact, either at the top or at the bottom. But the height of 30 inches of the Nuremberg tapestry and of 32 inches of the Metropolitan tapestry is nearly similar. The halos on the Metropolitan tapestry measure between  $6\frac{3}{4}$  inches and 7 inches; the halos of the Nuremberg tapestry are about 7 inches in diameter. Both tapestries have a blue background with yellow stars. The distribution of the stars between the different figures is done in the same way on both pieces. The character of these backgrounds looks rather different in the two photographs which we reproduce here. The Nuremberg photograph was made about twenty years ago with ordinary plates; the Metropolitan photograph was made recently with orthochromatic plates, exaggerating somewhat the values of the colors. Certain details are absolutely identical on both tapestries, as, for instance, the lining of the garment of the figure in the right corner of the Metropolitan tapestry (St. Margaret of Antioch) and that of the fourth figure from the left in the Nuremberg tapestry (St. Dorothea or St. Elizabeth). To judge from the reproduction the texture seems to be of the same quality in both weaves.

More important than the identity of measurement and of little details is the general character of the composition: the fine rhythm of the lines of the drapery, the expression, and the attitude of the saints, the way they move their arms and hold their different symbols is absolutely identical in both tapestries, while we find certain figures draped in white robes, others clad in colored garments in which the modeling is obtained by primitive hatchings which show that we are here at the beginning of a technical evolution.

We are for the moment only able to give the list of the colors

<sup>1</sup> Müntz, *Histoire générale de la Tapisserie*. Tapisseries allemandes, page 5.

employed in the Metropolitan tapestry. Thirteen colors are found: white, light cream, yellow, light brown (for the hair), another brown which seems to be a faded mauve, light red, dark red, light green, medium green, dark green, light blue, medium blue and dark blue (instead of black employed for the dark outlines). A technical peculiarity must be mentioned in the Metropolitan tapestry: the faces are outlined with dark blue thread employed in ordinary tapestry technique, and these dark blue lines are followed by a white couched thread which seems to have been contemporaneously applied by means of the "flying bobbin." The Metropolitan tapestry is in bad condition both at the top and at the bottom, but there are very few restorations and the remainder of the weave is in good condition. The number of warp threads to the inch is 11 to 12, and the weft consists of about 32 double movements of the shuttle to the inch. The height is 32 inches, the length 62½ inches.

If we insert the Metropolitan tapestry between the two halves of the Nuremberg piece we obtain a composition of a total length of 129 inches, which must have been about 35 inches high. We do not know whether these three fragments represent the whole length of the tapestry, but it is certain that a tapestry of this size cannot have been an antependium; it must have been a dorset, for the choir stalls of a church or the benches of some hall for Ecclesiastical purposes. It may have been much longer, as early textile work for such purposes like the famous Bayeux embroidery or the Apostle tapestry and the Angels' tapestry at Halberstadt, are all of considerable length. In any case we have the center of the composition, the Christ on the Cross, with the traditional Virgin and St. John on both sides. Next to this group we have on each side a group of four saints holding their attributes. The identification of the saints is in several cases not absolutely sure, but we have no reason to doubt the ascriptions which have been made by previous authors. On the left side of the cross we have (starting from the left) St. Clara, St. John Baptist, St. Agnes and St. Catherine of Alexandria. To the right side of the Cross, behind St. John: St. Margaret of Antioch, another saint which may be St. Dorothea or St. Elizabeth, St. Peter and St. Paul.

We have not been able to find any clew as to whether these saints are characteristic for any particular region. We hope to receive information as to the source of the Nuremberg tapestry. But



even if it was discovered in Germany, it seems certain that it is of French workmanship. The earliest German tapestries in Halberstadt, the rugs from Quedlinburg and the earliest German embroideries we know, are of a different character. Their youthful vigor contrasts with the refined subtlety of our tapestry. Even some Rhenish and Westphalian embroideries (as published in Lessing's *Deutsche Wandteppiche und Stickereien*) are quite different in style from our piece. Consequently there is every reason to consider this precious dorselet as the earliest specimen existing of French tapestry.

#### SOME PAINTINGS BY ALBERT PINCKHAM RYDER BY FREDERIC FAIRCHILD SHERMAN

ALBERT RYDER'S color and the way in which he uses it is a calculable quantity in the genesis of his paintings just as truly as are either his conceptions or the designs in which they are embodied. One may estimate quite accurately its actual value in relation to the total effect produced by any and every picture he has painted, though of course it cannot be mathematically stated. Whether the picture is thoroughly synthetic in its subtle harmonization of delicate shades and values or whether it be simply a masterly piece of design, as is sometimes the case, the color itself, though in the former instance entirely neutral in effect, and in the latter seemingly as negligible as that of a silhouette, is always an appreciable equation adding interest or meaning to the composition. His color simply as color embroiders his imaginations with rhymes as perfect as the rhythm of his line, and though a less important contribution to the poetry of his product than the design, in the sense that, one may say, rhyme is not a necessary part of poetry in that some of the noblest is written in blank verse, it is yet a means of informing it with an added loveliness.

Mr. Hunecker in one of his brilliant essays has spoken of that quality of the old masters of Italy which Ryder's color suggests at times and, if I remember aright, added that the artist deliberately sought in his own manner to emulate the beautiful coloring that adds distinction to their works. He must have been consciously trying to work out a more satisfactory approximation to their customary habit

when he undertook the little panel now in the Brooklyn Museum representing a lady, full length, in a landscape, which is seemingly done entirely over a background of gold. In a similar method he painted two panels of a three-fold screen for the late William M. Laffan which has now been broken up, these two panels and the center one, by Homer Martin, having been sold separately. The color of the Italian masters, however perfectly suited to the ecstatic elaboration of religious allegory though, is hardly that which harmonizes with our present day visualization of nature or of life, and naturally therefore he never very nearly approaches them. It might have been otherwise had he been of a deeply religious nature, which he was not, or more humanly sympathetic to that hint of divinity within one's self which generally was their inspiration. Nevertheless one of his noblest creations is a religious subject, the *Noli Me Tangere*, and though it has little or nothing in common with any early picture of the scene, it surpasses, most if not all, of them in an elevation of imaginative mysticism that distinguishes it among the masterpieces of religious art. He has painted the Christ as a suspended spirit visible in human form and clothed in the cerements of the grave, the very color of the flesh emphasizing the impression of the body of one newly arisen from the dead. The old masters pictured His a living presence in this incident, the measurable weight of which is supported by feet firmly set upon the earth. Ryder has succeeded in conveying more convincingly, at least to the world of to-day, the essential spiritual significance of the scene.

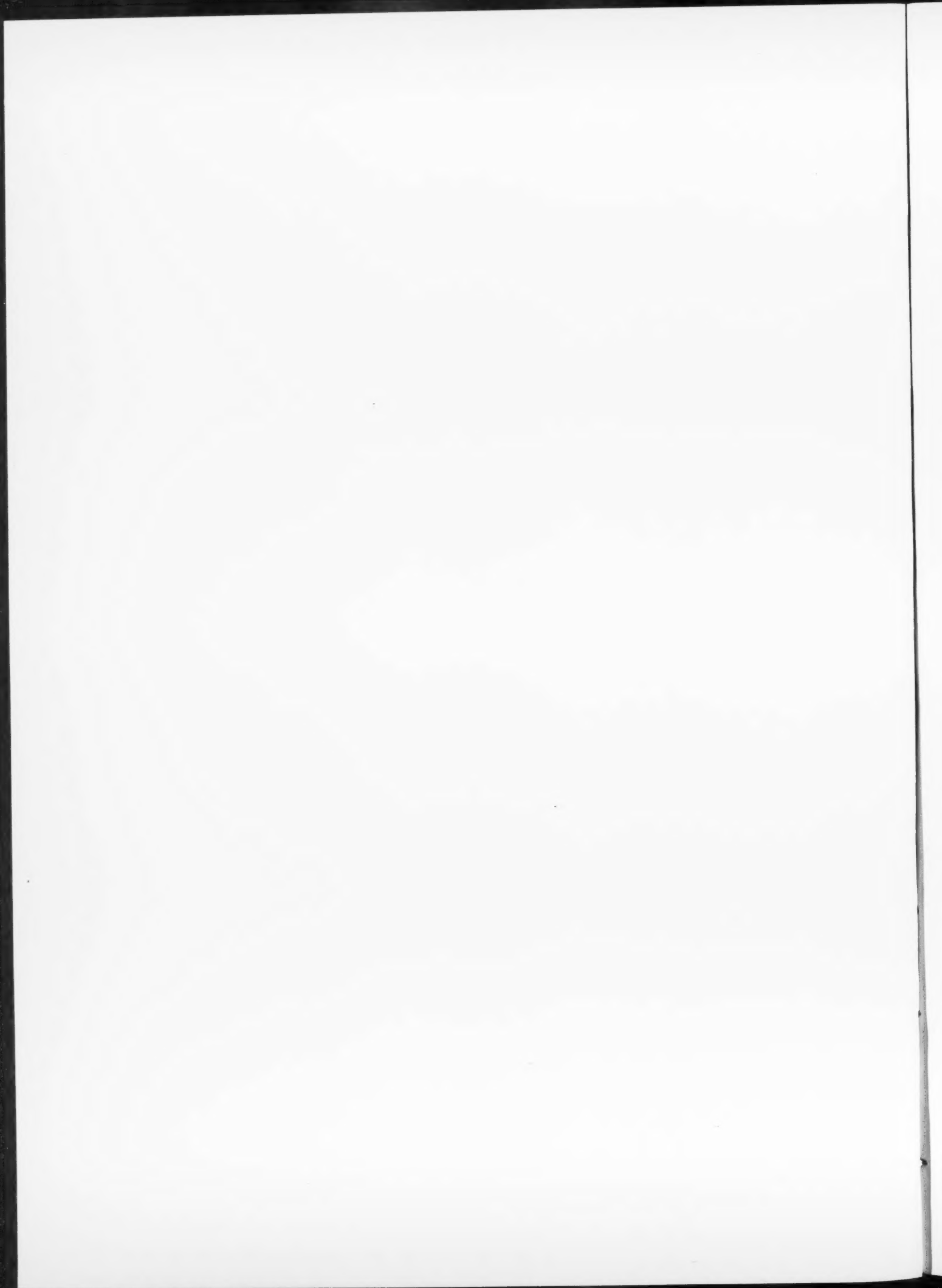
In such paintings as several of his marines the value of the color in compositions notable rather for their design is very evident. It pervades the pictures with a glamour as of the night at sea and puts one *en rapport* with these epics of the ocean as surely as the noble rhythm of the line emphasizes the movement of the waves which it inevitably suggests. However little there may be of any resemblance to reality either in color or in drawing in such canvases, they are no less penetrating interpretations of the might and majesty of the sea and like vivid dreams more moving than any memory of the ocean is ever likely to be. In the canvas called *The Sheepfold*, belonging to Mr. Augustus A. Healy and exhibited in the Brooklyn Museum, it is the pigment again that stamps the painting with the authority of a masterpiece in that it approximates in both color and intensity so nearly the actual effect of the moonlit night, recreat-



ALBERT P. RYDER: SIEGFRIED AND THE RHINE MAIDENS.  
*Collection of the late Sir William Van Horne, Montreal.*



ALBERT P. RYDER: PEGASUS.  
*Formerly in the collection of the late John R. Andrews, Bath, Me.*





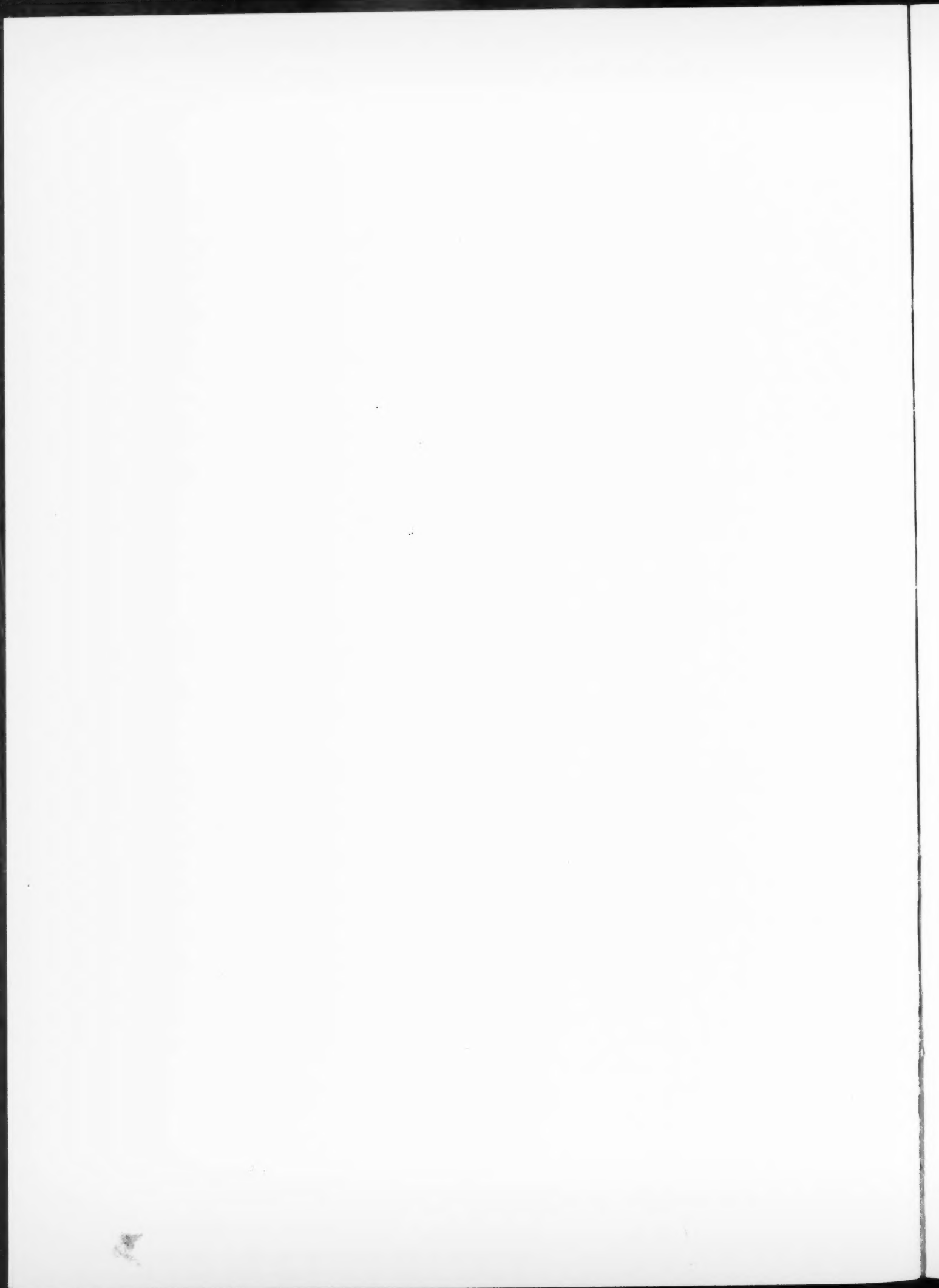
ALBERT P. RYDER: THE GOLDEN HOUR.



ALBERT P. RYDER: THE SHEEPFOLD.

*Collection of A. Augustus Healy. Exhibited at the Brooklyn Museum.*





ing in a magical way the vibrating mystery that constitutes its essential charm. The huddled group of sheep instinctively drawn together by the dark and the lighted window of the farmhouse nearby indicating the gathering of the family therein, give the picture an extra human interest and lend it a meaning associated with life that brings its beauty home to all. The poetry of the moonlight, the shadows of the trees against the glowing skies, the silence and the solitude of the night, it is reasonable to say are made evident to all by this vital human touch.

Ryder's astonishing ability as a draughtsman, his unerring instinct for the very lines of truth in drawing horses, sheep and other animals as well as domestic fowls and birds is seen in many canvases in which they are the chief if not the only interest. His horses are as fine as Géricault's and his sheep as fine as Jacque's when he wishes them to be. Nowhere else in art, sculpture or painting, I think, will one find anything more tragically beautiful or more poignantly pathetic than his picture of a dead canary. It is a more touching Elegy upon a dead song-bird than one may hope to find in music or in poetry, and it is a matchless piece of drawing and painting beside. Another panel with which I am familiar portrays three sheep so faithfully that a fellow craftsman once hesitated to purchase it because it seemed to him beyond the artist's abilities as a draughtsman.

He could also build up with wonderful verisimilitude scenes of witching splendor like the Siegfried and the Rhine Maidens in the collection of the late Sir William Van Horne or present the very essence of a tale from Chaucer in a painting like the Constance in the same collection. In *The Temple of the Mind* he originated an idea quite as romantic and expressed it just as completely and attractively. Indeed, he is notable for his invention as well as for the magical quality of his color—the invention of new incident to inform historic facts and romantic ideas with new interest, as well as the invention of eloquent and attractive compositions in which to embody them. It is just this portion of something that is new in all of his work, the original part of it that is his own creation, that is the measure of his genius and his greatness.

His landscapes are the least successful of his works and yet even in landscape he has done some fine things. Like the *Sunset Hour*, though they are generally those in which the human element is

introduced, by a single figure or more, and becomes, in reality, the centre of interest however lovely the landscape may be. In practically all of his pictures the human interest is present, and in most of them it is paramount, whatever their magic of mere paint or color, their suggestion of music or of rhyme, of time or of place. It is indeed the vital thing in his art. It informs the most imaginative of his works with meaning so evident as to be almost unmistakable. In the *Forest of Arden* one senses it in the broken limb of the blasted tree repeating the gesture of the cavalier who woos his lady in the foreground, he dwelling upon the beauty of Love's demesne and that dumb finger of earth's dead pointing upward as if to recall the lasting loveliness of Heaven. I do not wish to be misunderstood as implying that Ryder ever consciously attempts to point a moral in a picture or to tell a story, but simply to indicate how truly his work is informed with meaning and pregnant with suggestion—so much so, indeed, that from the best of it one gets an intellectual as well as an emotional pleasure of the highest sort. In the picture of *Pegasus* the figure rides the white winged horse out of the radiant heavens right over the edge of the world, bringing back to us to-day the message of the gods. What matters it if the winged steed is badly drawn in such a picture? Perhaps the spindly legs that would scarcely carry its weight subconsciously emphasize the power of those mighty wings outspread! Invariably almost Ryder sacrifices everything unnecessary to the realization of an idea in his effort to give the fullest and most forcible expression and the effectiveness to his pictures. Their interest and their charm sufficiently prove how wisely he chooses between the vital and the ineffectual elements in their composition and execution.





ANTONELLO DA MESSINA : PORTRAIT OF A MAN  
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